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ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

[0043] A plasma etch method for forming a patterned target layer within a microelectronic product forms an etch residue layer adjoining a patterned mask layer formed upon a blanket target layer. After removing the patterned mask layer, the etch residue layer is laterally increased to form a laterally increased etch residue layer. The laterally increased etch residue layer is employed as an etch mask for forming the patterned target layer from the blanket target layer. The method is particularly useful for forming gate electrodes within semiconductor products.